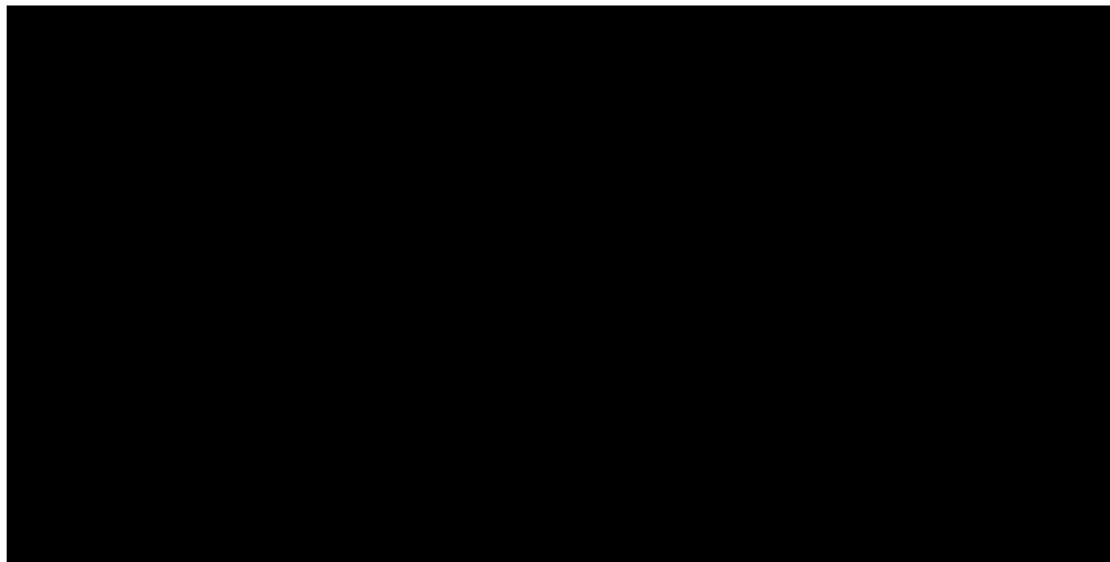


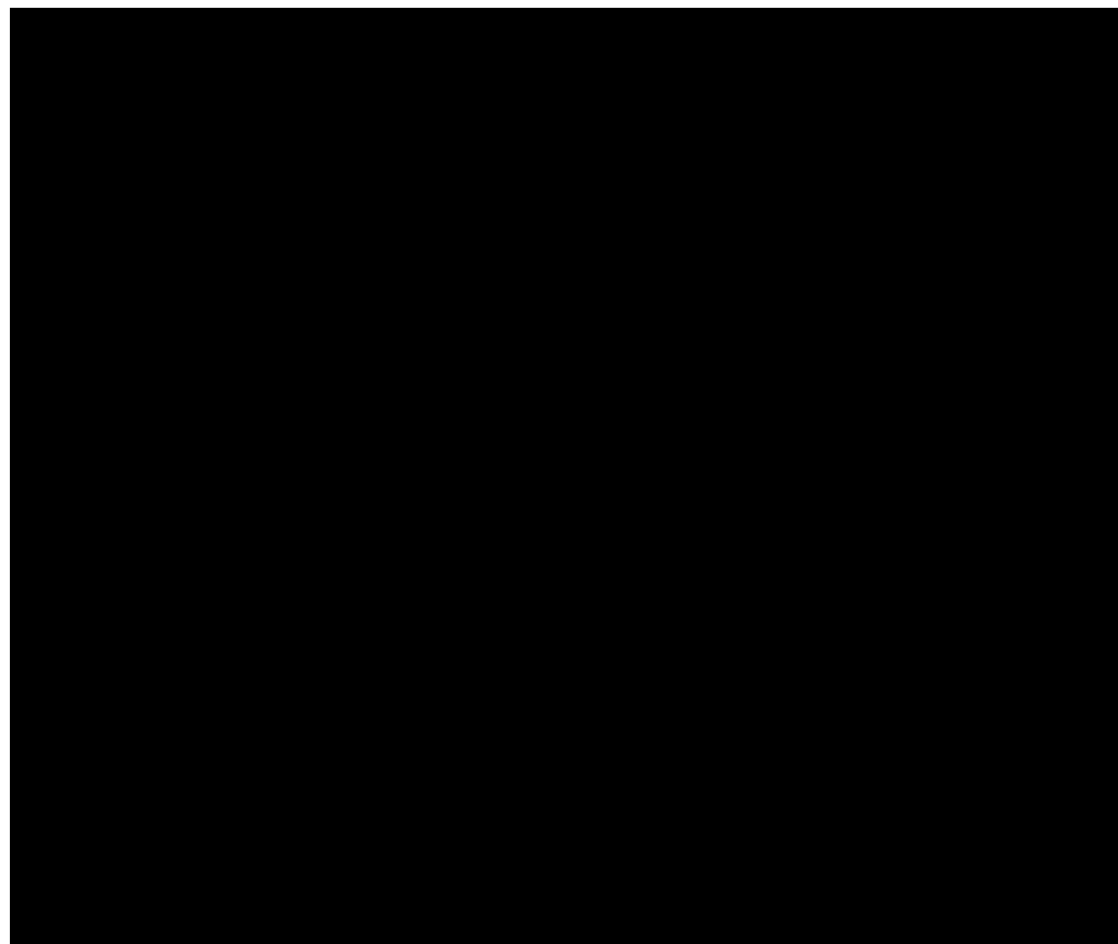
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NOFORN, NOCONTRACT, ORCON



TEXT
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS SITUATION REPORT (MONTHLY)
(DI IN SITREP 91-006) AUGUST 1991



NOFORN, NOCONTRACT, ORCON
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ITEM 6. THE MAGALLANES V SEIZURE: LESSONS LEARNED [REDACTED]

DISCOVERY OF 1,387 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE ABOARD THE VESSEL MAGALLANES V IN LATE JUNE HAS PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO ANALYZE THE LATEST MODUS OPERANDI OF A COCAINE TRAFFICKING NETWORK THAT HAS BEEN OPERATING SINCE AT LEAST 1987. [REDACTED]

THE SEIZURE

TWO DAYS BEFORE THE DEPARTURE OF THE VESSEL FROM BARRANQUILLA ON 16 JUNE, THE [REDACTED] RECEIVED A TIP THAT A VESSEL NAMED THE MAGALLANES WOULD BE LEAVING PORT SOON CARRYING 400 KILOS OF COCAINE BOUND FOR THE UNITED STATES. EN ROUTE, THE COCAINE WAS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO UNKNOWN VESSELS IN THE VICINITY OF ST. LUCIA. A FOLLOWUP REPORT, STILL REFERRING TO THE VESSEL AS THE MAGALLANES, INDICATED THAT THE TRANSFER OF COCAINE WOULD OCCUR OFF THE ISLAND OF DOMINICA. APPROPRIATE WARNINGS WERE ISSUED TO US AND EASTERN CARIBBEAN LAW ENFORCEMENT ENTITIES VIA BOTH DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE CHANNELS. [REDACTED]

THE VESSEL'S DEPARTURE FROM BARRANQUILLA TRIGGERED THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE OF EVENTS, ACCORDING TO A VARIETY OF REPORTING:

20 JUNE VESSEL SIGHTED BY US MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN THE SOUTHEAST CARIBBEAN.

- 21 JUNE US COAST GUARD VESSEL INTERCEPTS THE MAGALLANES V APPROXIMATELY 400 KILOMETERS WEST OF ST. LUCIA. A CONSensual BOARDING AND INSPECTION, LIMITED BY THE PRESENCE OF 500 TONS OF SUGAR, YIELDS NEGATIVE RESULTS.
- 22 JUNE VESSEL LOITERS ABOUT MIDWAY BETWEEN ST. LUCIA AND DOMINICA. BEING SHADOWED BY THE US COAST GUARD, THE MAGALLANES V IS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ST. LUCIAN COAST GUARD, WHICH ESCORTS THE VESSEL INTO THE PORT OF CASTRIES. A SECOND BOARDING OF THE VESSEL IS NEGATIVE.
- 23 JUNE CLAIMING TO BE EMBARRASSED BY THE US COAST GUARD BOARDING AT SEA, MASTER OF THE MAGALLANES V STATES THAT HE NO LONGER DESIRES TO UNLOAD HIS CARGO IN ST. LUCIA BUT WILL GO TO DOMINICA INSTEAD. VESSEL STEAMS OUT OF CASTRIES AND HEADS TOWARD DOMINICA, ARRIVING IN ROSEAU IN THE EVENING ESCORTED BY ST. LUCIAN COAST GUARD. COAST GUARDS OF BARBADOS AND FRANCE ALSO REPORTEDLY ASSISTED IN WATCHING THE VESSEL.
- 24 JUNE DOMINICAN AUTHORITIES BEGIN MONITORING THE UNLOADING OF THE VESSEL. ONLY HALF OF THE 12-MAN CREW OF THE VESSEL WORKS; THE OTHERS KEEP AN EYE ON DOMINICAN OFFICIALS.
- 26 JUNE FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF UNLOADING OF CARGO, DOMINICAN OFFICIALS COMMENCE IN-DEPTH SEARCH OF THE MAGALLANES V. AFTER NOTING FRESH WELD MARKS ON A BALLAST TANK, THEY ORDER IT PUMPED OUT, REVEALING 51 CANVAS BAGS CONTAINING THE COCAINE. [REDACTED]

THE MODUS OPERANDI AND LESSONS LEARNED

THIS SEIZURE ILLUSTRATES SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE MODUS OPERANDI OF THIS NETWORK. MOST NOTABLE ARE THE MEANS OF CONCEALMENT, THE ROUTING, AND THE DECEPTION TACTICS. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

FAILURE OF THE CREW OF THE MAGALLANES V TO DUMP THE COCAINE BEFORE DOCKING IN DOMINICA MAY REFLECT SHEER ARROGANCE OR GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE CONCEALMENT METHOD. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF THE INABILITY OF THE CREW TO GET TO, AND DUMP, THE COCAINE--A PROCESS THAT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TAKEN AT LEAST SEVERAL HOURS--WHILE BEING SHADOWED BY COAST GUARD VESSELS. THE APPARENT LOITERING OF THE VESSEL OFFSHORE IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 22 JUNE MAY REFLECT AN ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE AND PERFORM THE HIGH-SEAS TRANSFER ENVISIONED WHEN THE MAGALLANES V DEPARTED COLOMBIA. IT MAY ALSO REFLECT A PERIOD IN WHICH THE CREW UNSUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT TO GAIN ACCESS TO, AND DUMP, THE COCAINE. [REDACTED]


ROUTING PLAN

A SECOND NOTEWORTHY CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS NETWORK'S OPERATION IS THE DOUBLE TRANSFER. [REDACTED] THE COCAINE WAS TO BE OFFLOADED AT SEA TO OTHER VESSELS AND TAKEN TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC FOR EVENTUAL FORWARDING TO THE UNITED STATES. WHILE HIGH SEAS TRANSFERS ARE NOT NEW, THIS PARTICULAR ROUTING INVOLVING A MINIMUM OF THREE LINKS WITH TWO TRANSFERS BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND THE UNITED STATES IS EXCEPTIONALLY COMPLICATED. SINCE THE MAGALLANES V IS KNOWN TO HAVE SAILED DIRECTLY TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC LAST YEAR, THE ROUTING IN QUESTION INDICATES THAT THIS DRUG-TRAFFICKING NETWORK MAY BE FEELING THE PINCH OF US AND OTHER COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORTS IN THE CARIBBEAN. [REDACTED]

SUCH A COMPLICATED ROUTING PATTERN HOLDS BOTH GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR COUNTERNARCOTICS FORCES, IN OUR VIEW. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, IT INCREASES THE VULNERABILITY OF MARITIME DRUG TRAFFICKERS BY MAKING THEM MORE DEPENDENT ON SEA CONDITIONS AND REQUIRING CLOSE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION AMONG THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THIS METHOD OF TRANSPORT MEANS THAT THE VESSEL DEPARTING COLOMBIAN PORTS HAS LITTLE OR NO CLEAR LINK TO THE FINAL MEANS OF DELIVERY TO THE UNITED STATES. THE VALUE OF US EFFORTS TO REPORT VESSEL ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE DATA FOR VESSELS DOCKING AT COLOMBIAN PORTS, THEREFORE, IS CONSIDERABLY REDUCED. IN THE FACE OF SUCH A ROUTING PLAN, COUNTERNARCOTICS FORCES NEED MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION AND ACTIVITIES OF A FEW VESSELS, RATHER THAN A MASS OF DATA PROVIDING SPORADIC GLIMPSSES OF THE LOCATIONS OF NEARLY ALL VESSELS TRANSITING THE CARIBBEAN. [REDACTED]

DECEPTION

[REDACTED]



THERE WERE SEVERAL INDICATIONS OF DECEPTION THAT MADE THIS VESSEL WARRANT PARTICULAR WATCHING, HOWEVER. SOME OF THESE WERE APPARENT EVEN BEFORE THE VESSEL SAILED OR IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF ITS DEPARTURE. OTHERS DID NOT EMERGE UNTIL LATER. IN THE CASE OF THE MAGALLANES V, SCRATCHING THE SURFACE WOULD HAVE REVEALED THE FOLLOWING ''FLAGS'' TO COUNTERNARCOTICS FORCES BEFORE OR SOON AFTER THE VESSEL'S SAILING:

X--THE REPORTED OWNER OF THE VESSEL, DENIA SHIPPING COMPANY OF BARRANQUILLA, DOES NOT EXIST.

X--THE PREVIOUS OWNER OF THE VESSEL, MARITIMA COLOMBIA EXPORTA (MARCOMEX) HAS A HISTORY OF BEING LINKED TO COCAINE SHIPMENTS. AMONG THESE WAS A COCAINE SEIZURE IN 1988 IN ARUBA FROM A VESSEL THEN NAMED THE RODRIGO P. FOLLOWING THIS INCIDENT, THE SHIP WENT DORMANT, WAS REPORTEDLY SOLD TO DENIA SHIPPING, REPAINTED, AND RENAMED THE MAGALLANES V.

X--DOCUMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VESSEL, ITS CREW, AND BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THE SUPPOSED SALE OF THE VESSEL WAS PROBABLY NOTHING BUT A PAPER CHARADE. OF PARTICULAR NOTE IS THE FACT THAT THE VESSEL'S SHIPPING AGENTS REMAINED UNCHANGED, AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE VESSEL AT THE TIME OF THE DOMINICA SEIZURE HAD PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS THE CAPTAIN OF THE VESSEL EULALIA M, ALSO OWNED BY MARCOMEX.

X--ALTHOUGH THE VESSEL APPEARED IN LLOYD'S MARITIME DATA BASE, UNLIKE MANY (IF NOT MOST) VESSELS KNOWN OR THOUGHT TO BE TRANSPORTING DRUGS, ITS NEW NAME WAS SUCH AS TO MAKE THE VESSEL EASILY CONFUSED WITH ANOTHER VESSEL, THE MAGALLANES, OPERATED BY A US COMPANY BETWEEN THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA AND THE US GULF COAST. THIS APPARENT EFFORT AT DECEIT BY TRAFFICKERS WAS EFFECTIVE AT SEVERAL POINTS. THE INITIAL TIP AND FOLLOWUP INFORMATION FROM COLOMBIA MADE REFERENCE TO A VESSEL NAMED MAGALLANES VICE MAGALLANES V. SO TOO DID REPORTS AMONG US AND CARIBBEAN ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

X--THE AGENT FOR THE VESSEL AT THE TIME OF ITS DEPARTURE FROM BARRANQUILLA, MARENAS Y CIA. LTDA., (A.K.A. ARENAS Y CIA) HAS BEEN LINKED TO NUMEROUS DRUG SHIPMENTS IN THE PAST, AMONG THEM THE SEIZURE OF MORE THAN 3 TONS OF COCAINE FROM CONTAINERS DELIVERED TO FLORIDA AND PUERTO RICO IN 1987 AND THE OCTOBER 1989 SEIZURES FROM VESSELS OFF THE COAST OF MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS NETTING IN EXCESS OF 6 TONS OF COCAINE.

X--DECEPTION WAS CLEAR FROM THE DOCUMENTATION AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL OF THE VESSEL AT THE OUTSET. THE MAGALLANES V DEPARTED BARRANQUILLA DECLARING BARAHONA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AS ITS DESTINATION. THE CONSIGNEE OF THE CARGO, HOWEVER, WAS MANIFESTED AS

BEING LOCATED IN DOMINICA, AND THE VESSEL APPARENTLY SET SAIL FOR THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN VICE NORTHWARD UPON ENTERING THE CARIBBEAN FROM THE RIO MAGDALENA. [REDACTED]

IMPLICATIONS

THE MAGALLANES V SEIZURE WAS THE LARGEST EVER IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN, AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, HAS SEVERAL LESSONS FOR ANTIDRUG OPERATIONS. IT DEMONSTRATES THE VALUE OF CLOSE COOPERATION AMONG CARIBBEAN COUNTERNARCOTICS FORCES AND WILL PROBABLY BOOST THEIR MORALE, ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE REGIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM (RSS). A COALITION OF SECURITY FORCES OF ISLANDS IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN CREATED IN THE LATE 1980S, THE RSS HAS BECOME AN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE COUNTERNARCOTICS FORCE. THE SEIZURE ALSO ILLUSTRATES THE NEED FOR, AND VALUE OF, PERSEVERANCE IN THE PURSUIT OF SUSPECT VESSELS AND THE SEARCH OF THEM ONCE THEY ARE INTERCEPTED. IN ADDITION, THE CASE ILLUSTRATES THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF EXAMINING AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, CORRELATING THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF SHIPPING COMPANIES AND VESSELS TO DETECT ANOMALIES OR SUSPICIOUS PATTERNS. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE MAGALLANES V CASE, HOWEVER, ALSO ILLUSTRATES SOME OF THE DAUNTING CHALLENGES FACING MARITIME INTERDICTION FORCES. WE BELIEVE CONCEALMENT OF COCAINE BENEATH BULK CARGO IS NOT UNIQUE TO THIS INCIDENT OR TRAFFICKING NETWORK. TRAFFICKER USE OF THIS MODUS OPERANDI REDUCES THE CHANCE OF INTERDICTION ON THE HIGH SEAS BY MAKING A THOROUGH SEARCH OF VESSELS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE UNLESS THEY ARE DOCKED AND UNLOADED. MOREOVER, THERE ARE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT THE NETWORK ORCHESTRATING THIS SHIPMENT HAS BEEN OPERATING SINCE AT LEAST MID-1987 AND, DESPITE SEVERAL MAJOR INTERDICTIONS IN THE PAST, CONTINUES TO OPERATE. THE TRAFFICKERS MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SEIZURE AND MAY BE PONDERING COUNTERMOVES, SUCH AS ALTERING ROUTES, INITIATING A PROGRAM TO CORRUPT EASTERN CARIBBEAN OFFICIALS, EXPANDING THE USE OF MULTIPLE NAMES FOR A SINGLE VESSEL, REVERTING TO THE USE OF MORE READILY AVAILABLE COMPARTMENTS ON THE VESSEL AS CONCEALMENT SITES, OR EMPLOYING DISINFORMATION AND THE DISPATCH OF A DIVERSIONARY VESSEL AT THE TIME OF A COCAINE SHIPMENT. TIMELY AND DETAILED INTELLIGENCE THAT IS MOST LIKELY TO COME FROM A CAREFUL CULLING OF HUMAN-SOURCE REPORTING WILL BE NEEDED IF ANTIDRUG FORCES ARE TO ANTICIPATE THE NEXT MOVES OF SUCH A NETWORK. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

